

<b>TRANSMITTAL SLIP</b>		DATE
TO: <i>David Gries</i>		
ROOM NO. <i>7E62</i>	BUILDING	
REMARKS:		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

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ANTIGOVERNMENT RESISTANCE IN VIETNAM

Vietnam is not exempt from the sort of armed, antigovernment resistance activities that bedevil remote rural areas in every Southeast Asian nation except the city-state of Singapore. In Vietnam, sporadic acts of violence--assassinations of official personnel, ambushes of vehicles on upcountry roads, and bombings of government outposts--are concentrated in the Central Highlands and the Mekong River Delta. Scattered and uncoordinated, these resistance operations necessitate increased security measures, but have little impact upon the stability of the Communist regime. In fact, passive resistance is by far the greater problem for Hanoi. [REDACTED]

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We lack reliable information on resistance organizations [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Important questions concerning the scope of their activities, numbers of partisans, and recruiting base remain unanswered. [REDACTED]

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Ethnic Animosity

Armed resistance is rooted primarily in the longstanding racial animosity between Montagnard hilltribes and the dominant lowland Vietnamese. The Montagnards, who constitute about 4.4 million of a nation of perhaps 54 million, want autonomy from any government under ethnic Vietnamese control. Non-Communist collaborators with US forces during the Indochina war, the Montagnards remain politically naive and organizationally fragmented. [REDACTED]

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*This memorandum was prepared by the Office of East Asian Analysis in response to a request by Representative Donald Bailey. Comments and queries may be addressed to Chief, Southeast Asia Division, Office of East Asian Analysis, on [REDACTED]*

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The best known of the Montagnard resistance groups is the Front for the Liberation of the Central Highlands (DEGA), earlier known as the United Front for the Liberation of Oppressed Races (FULRO). Founded in 1958 in opposition to the Diem regime, the organization was pacified by later Republic of Vietnam policies, emerging again after 1975 to mount the most active resistance to the Communist government. Today DEGA claims to have several thousand personnel operating in small guerrilla units in the highland provinces of Dac Lac and Lam Dong. [REDACTED] 25X1

Other groups existing outside the mainstream of Vietnamese society--such as the Hoa Hao and Cao Dai religious sects--also claim active resistance to the regime, as do some Catholics and disgruntled anti-Communists from the previous government. In addition, extensive emigre organizations proselytize among expatriates and lobby foreign governments for political and material support, but have no discernible impact upon events inside Vietnam. [REDACTED] 25X1

#### External Support

DEGA and other groups receive a small amount of Chinese material aid--mostly small arms and ammunition--under Beijing's policy of supporting any and all resistance to Hanoi. Chinese-supplied weapons are hand-carried from depots inside Thailand across northern Kampuchea by resistance representatives escorted by Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchean (DK) forces. The logistics problems presented by this tortuous route are monumental, but there is no other feasible way to reach the highlands. The Chinese have tried to foster closer cooperation of DK and DEGA forces, as well as other nascent resistance movements, but anti-Vietnamese unity has proved elusive. In addition, China may be trying to stir up resistance sentiment among hilltribes isolated in northern Vietnam. [REDACTED] 25X1

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#### Passive Resistance

Passive resistance is of far greater concern to the government. Noncooperation has thwarted programs aimed at creating a socialist economy, and rampant black market trading has had a widespread corruptive influence among government and party cadre. Desertions from military service--particularly among southern draftees--have hampered operations in Kampuchea. [REDACTED] 25X1

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Dissatisfaction with the regime's policies does not generally translate into political action because there is no forum for effective dissent. A large number of Vietnamese continue, however, to "vote with their feet" by leaving the country. This refugee exodus not only is a source of embarrassment for the government internationally, it deprives the regime of skilled administrators, technicians, and craftsmen. Essential services in northern Vietnam, for example, have suffered immeasurably by the flight of ethnic Chinese who had dominated coal mining and worked the docks in Haiphong harbor. [REDACTED] 25X1

Prospects for the Resistance

Armed resistance within Vietnam is unlikely to become more than a thorn in Hanoi's side. The active resistance organizations of the Montagnards are critically hampered by logistic problems, geographic and cultural isolation from the bulk of the population, and their own disunity. Other groups are small and have a limited appeal. We see no immediate prospect of any force galvanizing the resistance into a movement that could cause serious problems for the government. [REDACTED] 25X1